Education at the End of History: A Response to Francis Fukuyama

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Abstract

By 1989, fascism had long been defeated in Europe, and reforms in the Soviet Union appeared to signify the collapse of communist ideology, prompting Francis Fukuyama to famously declare the 'end of history'. Since then, neoliberalism has been rolled out globally. This paper argues that, with regard to higher education, Fukuyama's claim that the pursuit of knowledge will be replaced by the 'satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands' is prescient. What, then, prompted Fukuyama to qualify his predictions in 2018? Citing both the turmoil of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, Fukuyama blames identity politics for the breakdown of consensus over what the nation is, or should be, and suggests that the promotion of creedal identity might rescue Western democracy from populism. This paper disagrees: using the example of Brexit and the promotion of Fundamental British Values in schools, it argues that creedal identity has become another expression of populism. Rejecting the claim that identity politics are the ultimate source of populism, it argues that populism is the predictable outcome of recession in the market economy.

Introduction

The putative father of neoliberalism, Friedrich von Hayek, developed his economic and social theory during World War II as a buffer against the totalitarian forces of communism and fascism (Ward, 2017). By 1989, fascism had long been defeated in Europe, and Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union appeared to signify the collapse of communist ideology, prompting Francis Fukuyama (1989) to famously declare:

> …the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 4)

In November 1989, not long after the publication of Fukuyama's paper, the world witnessed the dramatic fall of the Berlin Wall. To many, it seemed that the purportedly neutral market mechanism had finally triumphed over ideologically driven state apparatus, just as Hayek (2011) intended. Since then, neoliberalism has been rolled out globally through the work of organisations such as the World Bank, who have designed structural adjustment programmes to increase developing countries' balance of payments through, for example, 'trade liberalisation' (Jones, 1997, p. 123). Meanwhile, the European Union has adopted what Christopher Hermann (2007, p. 62) describes as 'key planks of the neoliberal agenda' including flexible labour markets and the privatisation of public companies and services, with a similar picture in other developed nations (Ball, 2012). The hard and soft uptake of neoliberalism across the world appears to confirm that we are indeed at 'the end of history' (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 4).

What, then, prompted Fukuyama to qualify his statement in 2018? Citing both the turmoil of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA, Fukuyama (2018) blames identity politics for the breakdown of consensus over what the nation is, or

should be, and warns that populism is a threat to Western democracy that might be averted through the cultivation of creedal identity.

This paper explores Fukuyama's theory on the end of history, first by considering the prescience of his ideas with regard to higher education, and second by exploring his notion of creedal identity, using the examples of Brexit and the promotion of Fundamental British Values in schools. This paper argues that, while Fukuyama describes with some accuracy the intellectual wasteland at the end of history, by arguing that identity politics are the source of populism he fails to acknowledge the role played by global recession in shaping the populist *zeitgeist.*

This paper employs Fukuyama's definition of the following terms: *idealism* is the belief that 'all human behaviour in the material world, and hence all human history, is rooted in a prior state of consciousness' (Fukuyama, 1989, p.6); *materialism* 'discounts the importance of ideology and culture and sees man as essentially a rational, profit-maximising individual' (ibid); *populism* emphasises 'national sovereignty and national traditions in the interests of "the people"' (Fukuyama, 2018, p.74).

The End of History

The central claim of Fukuyama's (1989) discourse on the end of history is that liberalism has seen off its fascist and communist rivals. Fukuyama (1989, p. 13) defines the end of history as the termination of 'ideological pretentions of representing different and higher forms of human society' than those offered by political liberalism. The end of history is, quite simply, the 'victory of one idea over another' (ibid, p.8); specifically the triumph of 'the "Protestant" life of work and risk over the "Catholic" path of poverty and security' (ibid, p. 7). This victory has been secured, he says, not because material conditions have dictated this change of outlook, but because 'the consciousness of the elites and the leaders ruling them' (ibid) in

Communist states has changed. The world, it seems, has simply fallen in love with the concept of political and economic liberalism.

Fukuyama continues his exploration of the post-historical landscape in his book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, published in 1992. Here, Fukuyama offers a treatise on recognition, defining it after Hegel as the acknowledgement of man as a '*human being*, that is as a being with a certain worth or dignity' (Fukuyama, 2012, p. xvi, italics in original). Fukuyama identifies a tension between the neoliberal mantra of economic participation and Hegel's idealism, saying that for Hegel the 'primary motor of human history' is 'a totally non-economic drive, the *struggle for recognition*' (ibid, p.135, italics in original):

> Hegel would never have endorsed the view of certain liberals in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, now primarily represented on the libertarian Right, who believe that government's only purpose is to get out of the way of individuals, and that the latter's freedom to purse their selfish private interests is absolute. He would have rejected the version of liberalism that viewed political rights simply as a means by which men could protect their lives and their money, or in more contemporary language, their personal "lifestyles." (Fukuyama, 2012, p.203)

Fukuyama (2012) does not explain *why* this anti-Hegelian version of recognition has taken hold. Instead, he expounds upon Nietzsche's (1976, p.129) theory of the 'last man', roughly defined as a sheep-like creature who lacks *thymos,* or pride that makes us prefer death over slavery. For Fukuyama (2012, p.305), the time of the Last Man is fast approaching: no longer able to ask if one lifestyle or value is better than another, we are 'preoccupied with material gain and live in an economic world devoted to the satisfaction of the myriad small needs of the body'. Fukuyama (2012, p.295) identifies 'creeping mediocrity' as one of the 'evils of extreme equality' in the consumer society. In America, he says, 'a host of people' devote their lives to ensuring that 'no little girl should have to pay more to have her locks cut than a

little boy, that no Boy Scout troop be closed to homosexual scoutmasters, that no building be built without a concrete wheelchair ramp going up to the front door' (ibid).

According to Fukuyama (2012, p.289), 'The question of the end of history then amounts to a question of the future of *thymos*: whether liberal democracy adequately satisfies the demand for recognition'. For thinkers on the Left, he says, the 'economic inequality brought about by capitalism *ipso facto* implies unequal recognition' (ibid), while for thinkers on the Right, 'human beings are inherently unequal; to treat them as equal is not to affirm but to deny their humanity' (ibid). For Fukuyama, the "right" kind of recognition has not been achieved in the consumer society, thus invalidating the notion that we have reached the end of history. This supposition is somewhat confusing, as Fukuyama's (2012) castigation of the dullness of identity politics devoid of *thymos* builds towards the reiteration of the conclusion of his 1989 paper: one day, history will re-start. Hope for restarting history is to be found, he claims, in the abundance of *megalothymia* in contemporary society, defined as the desire to have one's superiority recognised by others in the fields of politics, business, sport and the arts. For Fukuyama (2012), Nietzsche's 'last man' who cannot feel love, recognise creation or 'give birth to a dancing star' (Nietzsche, 1976, p.129) does not yet walk amongst us.

Fukuyama (1989) does not *welcome* the end of history, and closes his seminal paper with a eulogy to former animosities:

> The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history. (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 18)

Philosophers have critiqued Fukuyama's prophecy through reference to Hegel's foundational theory of the end of history, arguing for example that Fukuyama has misunderstood Hegel's spiritualism and imagines, erroneously, 'that economic liberalism will sublate religious and ethnic ties as soon as the "homogenous" system exists' (Harris, 1991, p.6). If Harris (1991) is correct, the global spread of political and economic liberalism will *not* demolish rival belief systems or neuter art and philosophy. Yet, when considering the development of higher education since 1989, Fukuyama's predictions appear to be accurate: studies by numerous academics give the impression that our universities have arrived at the end point anticipated by Fukuyama (1989, p.18), when the 'satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands' trumps the pursuit of knowledge.

Higher Education at the End of History

In 1996, George Ritzer described "McDonaldization" as a business model based on efficiency, calculability, predictability and control; a model that Eric Margolis (2004) argues is now pervasive in HE:

> The fast-food industry serves as the modern model including…global markets; rational scientific processes of production and management; emphasis on 'means of consumption' of standardized products that allows one to 'have it your own way'. (Margolis, 2004, p.368)

If Margolis (2004) is correct, "consumers" of contemporary HE want something cheap, bland and consistent, served up fast and with a smile. For Tom Nichols (2019), this consumer culture has distorted students' expectations of HE:

> College is no longer a time devoted to learning and personal maturation; instead, the stampede of young Americans into college and the consequent competition for their tuition dollars have produced a consumer-oriented experience in which students learn, above all else, that the customer is always right. (Nichols, 2019, p.71)

Perhaps not surprisingly, grade inflation has become a problem in the fast-food culture of HE, where the 'customer is always right': in 2019, figures released by the English universities' regulator, the Office for Students (OfS, 2019), showed that the proportion of students graduating with the highest possible degree classification was 29%; up from 16% in 2010-11. Perhaps more worryingly, the inflation of grades appears to have been accompanied by a deflation of knowledge. Victoria Millar (2016, p.472) argues that interdisciplinary curricular in Australia, designed to offer students a smorgasbord of "bite-sized" information, are growing in popularity, but warns that these degree programmes 'do not allow access to the same depth of knowledge that is available in discipline-based courses'. The extent to which universities have abandoned the pursuit of knowledge in favour of dishing up mental "finger food" is astonishing: Lawrence Busch (2017) claims that US students today spend half as much time studying as they did in the 1960s, and that half of them do not take any courses that require them to write more than 20 pages per semester.

As we have seen, Fukuyama (2012, p.295) believes that 'creeping mediocrity' is one of the 'evils of extreme equality' in the consumer society. This equality, he argues, is being driven by the mantra of identity politics informed by the anti-Hegelian belief that 'the [people's] freedom to purse their selfish private interests is absolute' (Fukuyama, 2012, p.203). If Fukuyama is correct, the "McDonaldization" of HE is the result of the distortion of the concept of freedom by identity politics, rather than the triumph of political and economic liberalism at the end of history. To consider if this supposition is correct, this paper now explores Fukuyama's (2018) theory of identity, expounded in his book of the same name.

Identity

Fukuyama (2018, p.ix) confesses, '[*Identity*] would not have been written had Donald J. Trump not been elected president in November 2016'. Back in 1992, Fukuyama had

identified Trump as an example of one of Nietzsche's 'men without chests' (Fukuyama, 2012, p.xii); a property developer whose vainglorious activities satisfied his *megalothymia* but could never hope to touch the 'reservoirs of idealism' at the end of history (ibid, p.328). Trump, says Fukuyama (2018, p.x), lacks 'basic honesty, reliability, sound judgement, devotion to public interest, and an underlying moral compass', yet is somehow leader of the free world. How is this possible? In light of Fukuyama's (2012) critique of "hollow chested" consumerism, we might expect him to conclude that, in voting for Trump, members of the consumer society were electing a talismanic representation of their own "empty" economic desires, and that Trump is indeed Nietzsche's (1976, p.129) 'last man'. Instead, Fukuyama (2018, p.xv) blames identity politics for Trump's victory, claiming 'Demand for recognition of one's identity is a master concept that unifies much of what is going on in world politics today'. Despite, he says, 'the rise of inequality within individual countries' (ibid, p.77), the 'dynamic new forces' shaping international politics are 'nationalist or religious parties, the two faces of identity politics, rather than the class-based left-wing parties' (ibid, p.74). Fukuyama is not alone in making this observation. For example, Karen Brodkin (2018) claims that identity politics, rather than class-based shared interests, inform contemporary political debate; Hameleers and Vliegenthart (2020, p. 19) note the trend for 'people-centric, anti-elitist and right- and left-exclusionist' newspaper articles, and Marchlewska et al (2018, p.152) identify a relationship between identity politics and 'resentment toward out-groups, including immigrants', which they claim is fuelling support for populist politics. Consistent with Fukuyama's theory, Marchlewska et al (2018) found that support for Trump 'was significantly positively correlated with collective narcissism [defined as 'an unrealistic belief in the in-group's greatness contingent on external validation' (ibid, p. 152)]; [national] identification, and group relative deprivation' (ibid, p.157).

According to Fukuyama (2006, p.9), the 'idea that modern politics is based on the principle of universal recognition comes from Hegel'. As we have seen, Fukuyama is comfortable with the idea that one's 'inner self is not just a matter of inward contemplation; it must be intersubjectively recognized if it is to have value' (ibid). However, Fukuyama (2006) believes that identity politics are a distortion of this principle of universal recognition. From Machiavelli to the American Founding Fathers, he says, political theory 'understands the issue of political freedom as one that pits the state against *individuals* rather than groups' (ibid, p.9, emphasis added). Under populism, political freedom is being reconceptualised as the state's acknowledgement of the rights, not of the individual, but of the *in-group*, roughly defined as people who consider themselves legitimate members of society (Marchlewska et al, 2018). Zsolt Enyedi (2017) articulates the danger of this reconceptualization:

> Populism is a threat to democracy primarily because it holds the potential of providing the state with a moral status that it otherwise lacks. Once the state turns into the embodiment of the virtuous people, the defense mechanisms developed against tyranny, such as freedoms, checks and balances, the rule of law, tolerance, autonomous social institutions, individual and group rights, or pluralism, are inevitably under threat. Populism has no programme for self-limitation once the liberation of the oppressed people is achieved. (Enyedi, 2017)

Fukuyama (2018) proposes an idealist method to thwart the rise of populism: the promotion of creedal identity, which he defines as a sense of national belonging based on adherence to a set of agreed principles. Although Fukuyama does not mention Hegel in connection with this theory of national identity, it carries an echo of Hegel's belief that 'the spirit' is, in its consciousness, 'the *citizens* of the nation' (Hegel, 2018, p.257, italics in original). This 'spirit', says Hegel, 'can be called the human law because it is essentially in the form of *actuality conscious of itself*' (ibid, italics in original). In a similar vein, Fukuyama praises America's creedal identity, enshrined in the American Constitution, which he claims is based on the belief in 'constitutionalism, the rule of law, democratic accountability and the

principle that "all men are created equal"' (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 158). He contrasts this "consciousness" with identity politics based on 'fixed characteristics such as race, ethnicity and religion' (ibid, pp. 158-159), which have presumably undermined America's creedal identity.

Educating Brexit

An obvious challenge to Fukuyama's (2018) supposition that active support for creedal identity might suppress populism is Britain's vote to leave the European Union in 2016, which he mentions as a correlate to the election of Donald Trump. The Brexit campaign was fought, and won, against a backdrop of idealist education policy seeking explicitly to foster a national "consciousness" through the promotion of Fundamental British Values (FBVs). Devised in 2011 and implemented from 2014 as part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, FBVs are defined by the government as 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014, p.5). Their promotion is a legal requirement in child-care facilities, schools and colleges in England. As I have discussed elsewhere (Ward, 2018), the ideas that constitute FBVs operate globally, and "Britishness" cannot be based on the lived experience of 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014, p.5), as these experiences are neither ubiquitous in the UK nor exclusive to this nation.

The tendency to appropriate universal traits as the Hegelian "spirit of a people" has been identified as a feature of fascist propaganda, which seeks to unite people not 'through the statement of rational aims' (Adorno, 1978, p.118), but through the formation of a synthetic 'bond' (ibid, p.121) based on the public's beliefs about who constitutes the 'beloved in-group' and who constitutes the 'rejected out-group' (ibid, p.128). Conversations based on

creedal identity, such as the Rule of Law, give rise to discussions about who is "outside" the circle, and, as noted by Mary Healy (2016, p.10), 'a thickly conceived (and enforced) shared identity' can be 'used as a tool of internal oppression'. In 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union by a margin of 3.8% (Uberoi, 2016). Analysis of the result reveals that 'A (negative) relationship exists between the proportion of the population that is foreign-born, an indication of immigration, and the vote share for Leave' (Uberoi, 2016, p.21). The fact that so many people *within* the circle of creedal identity decided to support what has come to be known as a populist ballot (Corbett, 2016) gives lie to the claim that the conscious promotion of creedal identity protects a nation from populism.

Michael Gove and Dominic Cummings were prominent members of Vote Leave, the official campaign in favour of leaving the European Union in the 2016 Referendum. In addition to the implementation of "creedal" FBVs, Gove and Cummings devised broader education policy hostile to identity politics, Gove as Secretary of State for Education from 2010-2014, with Cummings as his Special Advisor. Gove's regressive education reforms, such as the celebration of British 'imperial heroes' in the history curriculum (Watson, 2019, p.1), appear to be have been guided by Hayek's (2011, p. 122) conviction that 'a successful free society will always in a large measure be a tradition-bound society'. Cummings, on the other hand, has created a platform to share his ideas, Dominic Cummings's Blog, in which he expounds upon a jumble of non-traditional topics such as 'Complexity, "fog and moonlight", prediction, and politics II: controlled skids and immune systems (UPDATED)' (Cummings, 2014). The strangeness of Cummings's writing brings to mind the contemporary description of Hegel as an 'illiterate charlatan, who reached the pinnacle of audacity in scribbling together and dishing up the craziest mystifying nonsense' (Wayper, 1954, p.153). This description of Hegel, and by inference Cummings, is perhaps unfair, and in defence of Cummings he has publicly admitted that he has no 'circle of competence', only 'demented

focus' (Cummings in Heawood, 2019). Cummings, with his 'demented focus' and Gove, with his rampant nostalgia, masterminded a school curriculum infused with the "quest for *thymos*" advocated by Fukuyama (2012). In a direct challenge to the 'creeping mediocrity' of identity politics (Fukuyama, 2012, p.295), Gove (2014) proclaimed that he would not tolerate 'lowering pass marks and inflating grades to give the illusion of progress'. In the past, says Gove, parents were 'assured in vague airy and amiable terms that their child was a nice lad and doing perfectly well' (ibid). From now on, recognition of a child's academic worth will be governed by 'hard data' (ibid).

As we have seen, the Vote Leave campaign was led by figures sympathetic to Fukuyama's stance on identity politics, but economic disillusionment was crucial to its success; a phenomenon scarcely touched upon by Fukuyama (2018). In his analysis of UK government data, Thiemo Fetzer (2019, p.2) reveals that 'the austerity-induced withdrawal of the welfare state since 2010' played a significant role in both the demand for an EU referendum and its result. Fukuyama's (2018, p.8) anti-materialist belief that 'both economics and politics presuppose an autonomous prior state of consciousness that makes them possible' renders him unable to accommodate the enormous social impact of the Great Recession of 2008 in his theory of the end of history. Furthermore, and more worryingly, it blinds him to the reality that populism is a direct consequence of what he once joyfully proclaimed as the 'unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism' over socialism (Fukuyama, 1989, p.13).

Populism

Despite Fukuyama's (2018) deep misgivings about populism, then end of history, which he defines as consensus over the wisdom of economic and political liberalism, is *not* an illusion. Neoliberals have been widely condemned for propagating the belief that there is no

alternative to the market economy, making the Right the bogeymen of contemporary politics. Far less attention has been given to the Left's tacit support for the neoliberal project, which no doubt justified Fukuyama's (1989) hypothesis that political debate has ended. Confronting the demise of European Communism in the 1980s, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985, p.4) identified a route of travel in which the Marxist concept of the 'universal class' (ibid, p.4) would be replaced by the concept of a "plurality of interests". These interests, they argue, arise from the particular demands of 'the new feminism, the protest movements of ethnic, national and sexual minorities, the anti-institutional ecology struggles…[and] the anti-nuclear movement' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.1), which had been fermenting in the West since the 1950s (Moran, 2015). As if in reply to Lyotard's (2005, p. 82) postmodern invitation to 'wage war on totality', Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p.3) argue that '[j]ust as the era of normative epistemologies has come to an end, so too has the era of universal discourses'. Marxism, according to Laclau and Mouffe, is just '*one* of the traditions through which it becomes possible to formulate this new conception of politics' in which no particular tradition aspires to speak the '*truth* of society' (ibid, italics in original). As a totalising theory, Marxism was now redundant.

In 1963, Thomas Sowell, a member of the Chicago School of Economics, published a paper on Karl Marx that was sympathetic to the direction of travel advocated by new-Left thinkers such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985):

> The Marxian stress was not on "ideal rights" but on "material means." When man is free "in the materialist sense," according to Marx, he is "free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality"…The abolition of classes was not to be for the purpose of making all men uniform atoms in society, not to destroy variation, but to make the individual rather than the class the unit of variation. (Sowell, 1963, p. 120)

Neoliberals in the wake of Ludwig von Mises (1966) have chosen to define freedom not as an ideal that animates liberal economic theory, as proposed by Hayek (2011) and Fukuyama, 2012; 2018), but as the exercise of 'complete economic participation' (Ramey, 2016, p.2). This concept of freedom is highly compatible with the materialist, and purportedly Marxist, belief that freedom is best obtained through experiencing life as a 'unit of variation' (Sowell, 1963, p.120). Perhaps for this reason, the new-Left's preoccupation with recognition during the 1980s (Fraser, 1995) was swiftly translated into a mantra of "equality of consumption", satisfied through the provision of goods and services tailored to the 'wishes and desires' (Mises, 1966, p. 67) of various sexual, racial and religious groups (Moran, 2015). Hence Fukuyama's (1989, p.18) aforementioned lament that the 'struggle for recognition' has been replaced by a life of 'economic calculation'. In 1987, Barbara Kruger explored the materialist capture of idealism through her photolithograph, 'I shop, therefore I am'; a parody of the famous idealist creed, 'I think, therefore I am'. This "meeting of minds" of neoliberals and new-Left thinkers has contributed to the dominance of the market mechanism at the "end of history", as described by Fukuyama (1989).

In the 1960s, neoliberals such as Mises (1966, p.67) claimed that 'man makes use of his reason for the realization of wishes and desires'. Under neoliberalism, these wishes and desires have come to be framed exclusively in terms of consumption: in order to be "free", we must campaign tirelessly for our rights as consumers against whoever controls the supply of goods or services. Milton Friedman (1962) was among the first neoliberals to attack the "producer bias" in education. Although his proposed solution of a voucher scheme to give parents "consumer control" over their children's education enjoyed limited success, consumer control has become a dominant feature of the market society. Whether in airports, hospitals or beauty salons, we are constantly invited to provide feedback on our customer experience; a phenomenon fully embraced by UK universities in the form of the National

Student Survey (OfS, 2020). In the UK, the creation of an academic precariat has further undermined producer control of HE: figures released in 2019 reveal that 33% of UK academic staff are employed on fixed-term contracts (HESA, 2019). Meanwhile, Universities UK (2019), the mouthpiece for vice-chancellors of UK universities, is working closely with the UK's Department for Education on the development of a new student-led performativity measure, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which risks undermining the independence of HE quality assurance (Gourlay & Stevenson, 2017).

The demand for consumer control of HE has been infused with what Cas Mudde (2004, p.561) describes as paranoia over the power of 'the "progressives" and the "politically correct"' in the wake of identity politics. Populist paranoia over academia has been fuelled by speculation that university staff are exploiting what little remains of producer-bias in HE to lecture students on the perils of Brexit. In 2017, Conservative MP and government whip, Chris Heaton-Harris, sent a letter to every university, asking them to declare what they were teaching their students about Brexit and to provide a list of tutors' names (*The Guardian*, 2017). Despite UK academics' obvious compliance with the neoliberal "consumer rights" agenda, they have been accused by populist politicians and media of defying the "will of the people" (see for example, *The Daily Mail*, 2017).

Populists deride "experts" as poodles of the elite (see for example, Gove, 2016). We might, therefore, expect our universities to be at the vanguard of resistance to the debasement of political and economic liberalism bemoaned by Fukuyama (2018), despite the introduction of consumer control in HE. This seems unlikely, partly because academics are aware of Karl Polanyi's (2001) longstanding claim that free market economies have a tendency to lurch to the Right, making it difficult for academics to defend Fukuyama's idealist vision of political and economic liberalism simply because HE has now taken a populist turn. More significantly, academics are unlikely to defend Fukuyama's idealist account of liberalism

because, as stated previously, the Left has reached consensus with the Right over the material basis of human existence. When Fukuyama proclaimed the end of history in 1989, Marxism was not merely finished as a totalising theory: Marx was a fallen god; yet so too was Hegel and anyone else preaching fraternity or transcendence. At the end of history, says Eugene McCarraher (2019), there arose a new divinity, worshipped by all:

> The Market ascended into the ontological sublime; the Entrepreneur and the Technological Innovator rose into the communion of saints and the pantheon of demi-gods; economists assumed holy orders as the number-crunching clerisy of a pecuniary civilization; the corporate plutocracy publicized itself as the hippest imperium in history. The Business Civilization consummated human striving in the permanent revolution of cool, while the Visionary Commonwealth languished in the memories of aging bohemians and radicals. (McCarraher, 2019, p.666-667)

Under the new religion of neoliberalism, it is difficult for academics to express agnostic beliefs without sounding anachronistic; a problem explored by Roy Connolly (2013):

> Literature from academics critiquing the antidemocratic, antisocial policy of the marketplace and proposing alternative paradigms has been utterly marginalized…Similarly side-lined is the body of literature clearly articulating the failure of neo-liberal educational reform. And, finally, wilfully ignored is contemporary evidence about the failure of free markets, which clearly demonstrates that the consequence of 'laissez faire' is not spontaneous order but economic chaos. (Connolly, 2013, p.230)

In this morass, how might academics don the mantle of the expert; and to what end?

Conclusion

This paper has explored Fukuyama's writings on the end of history and reached two conclusions:

First, Fukuyama's (1989, p.18) claim that 'The end of history will be a very sad time' appears to be correct with regard to higher education. Our universities have been reconfigured to guarantee customer satisfaction; a fundamental tenant of what McCarraher (2019) describes as the religion of the market place. The results of this process include the 'dumbing down' of curricular (Busch, 2017, p.62), grade inflation, and the creation of an academic precariat to undermine producer control. As an accompaniment to this process, heretical research is discouraged, and politicians and the press pour scorn on "politically correct" academics. Fukuyama (2018) would have us believe that the "McDonaldization" of HE is the result of the distortion of the concept of freedom by identity politics, rather than the triumph of political and economic liberalism at the end of history. This conjecture is difficult to support in light of the demonization of "producer bias" in the market economy.

Second, Fukuyama (2018) is mistaken in his belief that the promotion of creedal identity will thwart populism. The Fundamental British Values of 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014, p.5) conform to Fukuyama's (2018) ideal of creedal identity, defined as a sense of national belonging based on adherence to a set of agreed principles. Far from acting as a brake on identity politics, the "national belonging" fostered by FBVs panders to what Marchlewska et al (2018, p. 157) describe as 'collective narcissism' - the insidious identity politics of the extreme Right. This paper concurs with Hugh Starkey's (2018) theory that the promotion of FBVs is one element in 'an increasingly elaborate regime of state and privatised infrastructures that monitor and manage the migrant as a counterfeit citizen' (Suzanne Hall, 2015, in Starkey, 2018, p.159).

According to Fukuyama (2012, p.203), Hegel would have been appalled by the neoliberal definition of political rights as the protection of individuals' 'personal lifestyles'. Fukuyama expresses thinly veiled contempt for such things as the provision of a 'concrete

wheelchair ramp' (ibid, p.295), believing that society is pandering to the demands of identity politics, which have come to dominate political debate since the 1950s (Moran, 2015). In so doing, Fukuyama fails to acknowledge that the equation of rights with consumption is a fundamental tenet of free market ideology, as noted in the 1940s by Polanyi (2001). In the market economy, self-actualisation requires access to goods and services, and gender inclusivity, disability access and the tolerance of diversity underpin the universal right to consumption. According to Polanyi (2001, p.265), protracted economic stress in a market economy results in a two-way split of blinkered liberalism, in which we cling to 'an illusionary idea of freedom', and pragmatic fascism, in which we accept reality and 'reject the idea of freedom'. Today, frustration over the illusionary freedom of the market society is being directed by populists, not into fascistic surrender, but into anger that the purported benefits of the consumer society are being monopolised by minority groups favoured by the "elites" (see, for example, Douglas Murray's (2008) diatribe against the preferential treatment of Muslim immigrants by Europe's political elite).

Polanyi (2001) cautions that recession compromises our "personal lifestyles" and curtails our (illusionary) rights as consumers, often with disastrous political consequences (he refers specifically to the rise of fascism in Europe during the 1930s). In their study of the relationship between identity politics and populism, Marchlewska et al (2018) explore three phenomena: support for the populist Law and Justice party in Poland; support for Brexit in the UK, and support for Trump in the USA. They conclude that, in all three countries, 'feelings of in-group disadvantage' have contributed to the formation of 'a defensive national identity' (ibid, p. 151), in a disturbing echo of Polanyi's (2001) seminal study. Brexit and the election of Trump in 2016 are mysterious to Fukuyama (2018), yet are the predictable outcomes of recession in the market economy. It seems that, beyond his divination of our dreary curation of the remnants of history, Fukuyama was unable to see what was coming.

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